

# \* Officials hear about plans for runway

(Continued from Page 1A) will do an environmental analysis of the runway expansion.

Mr. Weisenberger said they have had several meetings and some of the people there on Friday had heard this presentation before.

He said the existing runway actually needs to be wider to meet Federal Aviation Administration standards, and the pavement is showing stress cracks.

The city did talk about extending the current runway, he said, but when they looked at the cost, because of a gully which would have to be filled, it would be like building a new one.

All of the larger planes go into McCook now, said Mr. Weisenberger, then the people are driving to Oberlin. All of that business going to Nebraska could be staying in Kansas, he said, along with all of that money. How many miles is it from McCook to Oberlin? asked Mrs. Miller. About 30, said Mr. Weisenberger, but it is about 45 from McCook to Jennings.

What about other airports in the area? she asked. There is Atwood and Norton, said Mr. Weisenberger. Norton has a 5,000-foot runway, but it isn't as conducive to jet operations, especially with Bus and Coach International's commitment to the Decatur County community.

Federal Aviation Administration officials have said they can see a 5,000 foot runway in Oberlin, he said, but the city wants to work with the Transportation Department to get money for the other 2,000 feet.

The federal agency has approved the length of the runway at about a 5,000 foot, said Mr. Shike, but hasn't promised any money. The agency says a 7,000 foot runway is OK, but they have to juggle their money too, he said.

The nearest 7,000-foot runway is in Garden City, and people still have to drive there to use it, said Mr. Weisenberger.

So that's how you would use transportation money is to get to 7,000 feet? asked Mrs. Miller. Yes, he said.

What about a time frame? she asked. That depends on land purchasing, he said, but the city is probably 2 1/2 to three years out from dirt work.

What has happened at the bus company in the last year? asked Ms. Grafel. Mrs. Niblock handed out informational sheets on the firm's new bus. The company, which is out of California, opened its headquarters in Jennings, she said. The buses are assembled in China using U.S. standards and components.

Basically, the company takes the best parts and develops a motor coach, she said. There are four major competitors in the market now, said Mrs. Niblock, and they are looking at pushing the No. 4 company out of that slot in a year.

The company purchased the old Jennings School building on eBay, said Mrs. Niblock, and remodeled it. "It's a great story," said Mrs.

Miller.

They are trying to get the parts distribution sent out of Jennings, she said, and they are looking at having a United Parcel Service or FedEx plane stop in Oberlin. They are using those services now, she said, but the parts probably come through Hays.

She said they are also talking about opening a call center in Jennings for inbound calls. The company has ads out to hire people all the time, she said.

So far, said Ms. May, anytime BCI has said they will do something, they do it. The company, said Dr. Anderson, has also given the city a letter of intent to lease land at the airport to build a hangar.

Greg Lohofener said they want the 7,000-foot runway instead of 5,000 feet partly because Oberlin is a good location, in the middle of the United States half-way between I-70 and I-80. If the city can promote fuel stops here, it could lead to a new motel and more businesses. This would be something unique, he said.

Ms. Grafel said they want to work with the National Guard and Homeland Security as well as others to use the airport.

Sen. Ostmeyer asked if Mrs. Miller had ever been to Oberlin, and she said she had.

People who drive down Main Street in Oberlin see that the businesses are open, he said, and there aren't a lot of empty store fronts. The people in Oberlin are aggressive and are going to keep their school open, too, he said. He said he understands that the Department of Transportation has to look at all the applications, but said any support they can give would be great. It would help keep Oberlin, as well as western Kansas, viable.

The bus firm has made a commitment here, he said; they are for real, they have taken an old school and fixed it up. The community, said Sen. Ostmeyer, is behind this.

This will benefit all of Kansas, he said. Why would we want to shut down a project to Kansas to benefit Nebraska?

Mr. Brown said he has been a commissioner for 15 years, and during that time, people have tried to get businesses here. He said they have kept waiting for BCI to ask for tax money or something, and they haven't.

Mr. Steffen said the Commerce Department is excited about the bus company and what they are doing, but also the businesses that could spring up because of it.

In the next 10 to 15 years, said Mayor Stanley, it would be nice to see the county on the list with a growing population, not a declining one. Mrs. Miller agreed.

Just think, for the cost of a mile of Interstate highway, said Mr. Shields, Oberlin could have its runway. Mrs. Miller said the department would continue working with the Federal Aviation Administration and the Decatur County group on the project.

who helps with the program.

This year, she said, the kids will learn about the 10 Commandments. The program is open to all children, no matter what church they attend, she said. The students will be given a snack each day. There is no cost to join the United Explorers.

This year's program leaders include Miss Smith, Carol Brown, Tim Thornton and Kimberly Davis.

## IMMEDIATE OPENINGS - NOW HIRING

Phillips County, NW Kansas swine production facility is now hiring individuals to work in all areas of live animal production. We offer competitive wages, opportunity for advancement, health insurance, retention bonuses, excellent fringe benefits and \$1,000 SIGNING BONUS. Call 785-854-7460 for an application. SMS is an EOE.

## FULL TIME FARM POSITION

NW Kansas grain production operation located in Phillips County is looking for full time farm help. No-till, 4,000 acres of irrigated and dry land. Pivot and farm machinery experience a plus. Competitive pay package and housing available. Fringe benefits include health insurance and retention bonuses. For application please call 785-854-7460, ext 3 (day), or 785-854-8022 (evening).

## Making a donation



**GIVING A PINT OF BLOOD**, Joan Wessel was one of dozens of area residents to show up last Wednesday to donate during the Red Cross Blood Drive at The Gateway. — Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

# \* Council makes no decision on wind

(Continued from Page 1A) Sunflower Electric enough and can't get power from it, it might make things less competitive.

Does Sunflower Wind have agreements with Sunflower Electric to use its transmission lines? asked City Attorney Steve Hirsch. Neither Mr. Barton nor Mr. Beren could answer.

In the agreement, if Sunflower Wind isn't generating anything by June 1, 2009, the contract is terminated, said Mr. Berens.

Will the price of power generated by back-up units be the same price as wind power? asked Mayor Joe Stanley. Yes, said Mr. Berens; if there is a firm rate, it is a firm rate no matter what.

Mr. Barton said he has an office in Colby and one in the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center here. Everyone involved in Sunflower Wind lives in this area, he said.

Ms. May, who said she went to a meeting about wind power about a year ago, asked how Sunflower Wind can generate and sell power for 6 cents a kilowatt hour. She said at the meeting she went to, experts said it would cost 10 cents to generate it.

Mr. Barton said part of that is the fact that the firm plans to build its

turbines, although he couldn't say where in Kansas that will be done.

Ms. May said Sunflower Wind saying it can generate at 6 cents instead of 10 cents doesn't make any sense to her. She said she doesn't think it is possible just because of local manufacturing.

Is the technology really there for the hydrogen back-up? asked Mayor Stanley. On that scale, said Mr. Barton, yes. The thing is that if the hydrogen fails as of June 1, 2009, then it isn't the city's problem.

What about the methane back-up? asked Mayor Stanley. The technology, said Mr. Barton, is there. They are still in negotiations for it with feed lot operations and leasing land.

The No. 1 goal of Sunflower Wind, said Mr. Barton, is to be the city's full-time power supplier.

If this is such a good project and Sunflower Wind can provide power so cheaply, what's wrong with going through the bidding process like everyone else? asked Councilman Ray Ward.

The first right of refusal gives Sunflower Wind the option to negotiate first with the city and then the right to match or beat any other offer, said Mr. Berens. If Sunflower Wind could be part of the bidding process, asked Ms. May, then why

does the company need the first right of refusal?

"Basically because it gives us the option to match it or do better," said Mr. Berens.

How much is Sunflower Wind investing in the county? asked Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. The turbines have a market value of about \$3.1 million each, and there will be 20 of them, said Mr. Barton for a total of \$62 million, plus construction costs.

That is not taxable by the county, said Mr. Hirsch, although he didn't give a reason why.

Is the company open to investors? asked Dr. Anderson. It is open to local shareholders, said Mr. Barton.

"We just don't know enough to say yes or no," said Mayor Stanley. It sounds like the city is going to have to run its power plant to steady this energy coming into the system, said Councilman Rob McFee. It also sounds like Sunflower Wind wants the right to buy the power plant.

The agreement would allow the first right to buy the power plant to Sunflower Wind if the city ever decided to sell it, said Mr. Shike.

Mr. McFee said he doesn't see the city ever selling the plant. Buying the power plant would be more to

protect our territory, said Mr. Berens. Basically it is in Sunflower Wind's backyard, so the agreement would mean that if the city sold, it just couldn't go to anyone because the company would have the first right to match any offer.

Mr. Barton said the agreement doesn't mean that the power plant would have to run all the time.

So the idea that St. Francis, Sharon Springs and Oberlin all have working power plants has nothing to do with this? asked Ms. May.

There were lots of factors, said Mr. Barton. Mr. Berens said managing partner Dan Rasure, who wasn't at the meeting, would have to answer that.

Would the city's power plant have to be running for the city to get power from the wind farm? asked Mr. Ward. No, said Mr. Berens, but if the market price was higher than what it cost to turn on the plant, the city might choose to run the plant instead of buying off the market, as it does today. The concept is excellent, said Ms. Grafel, but the application of the concept, well, there are some questions.

The council didn't make a decision, but will hold an informational meeting next week at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 20, at The Gateway. The meeting will be open.

# Six people pick all 10 winners; tiebreaker used

Six people picked all 10 games correctly in the second week of *The Oberlin Herald's* Pigskin Pick-em contest.

Travis Raile of Oberlin not only guessed all the high school and college football games correctly, he said that Kansas State would beat San Jose State 35-10, only four points off the actual 34-14 score for the Wildcats.

He wins \$15 in scrip money spendable at any of the Pigskin Pick-em sponsors listed on Page 5A of today's paper.

Norm Wendelin was right behind, missing the 'Cat's victory by just five points. He wins second place and \$10 in scrip.

The Raile family was on a roll, because Valisha Raile also guessed all the regular games. She came in

third because she thought that the Wildcats would overcome San Jose by 11 points more than they did. She wins \$5 in scrip.

Coming in close with 10 correct guesses but not in the money were Betty Grout, Atwood, 12 points off the tie-breaker score; Mark Merriott, McCook, 13 points off; and Gary Anderson, 15 points off.

Ten people guessed nine out of 10 right: Todd Ketterl, Owen Wilson, Amanda Grafel, Ivis Hanson, Ryan McEvoy, Kimberly Solko, Ron Solko and Kenny Gee, Oberlin; Kari Ketterl, Herndon; and Billy McCoy, Danbury.

Guessing eight out of 10 right were Helen Gee and Colleen Gee, Oberlin; Vernon Ketterl, Herndon; and Jeff Reinert. Diana Solko came up with seven out of 10 correct.

Contest rules are on Page 5A of today's paper with an entry form. Forms also are available at the sponsoring businesses, Home Planning Center, Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Fredrickson Insurance Agency, Wagner Chevrolet, Buick, Pontiac and Cadillac of McCook, Raye's Grocery, *The Oberlin Herald* and *The Country Advocate*; Prairie Petals, the LandMark Inn and Ward Drug Store.

This week's game winners were: Golden Plains over Healy/Western Plains, 50-20.

St. Francis over Goodland, 22-

- 0.
- The University of Kansas over Southeast Louisiana, 62-0.
- Hoxie over Oberlin, 46-0.
- Nebraska over Wake Forest, 20-17.
- Concordia over Colby, 12-6.
- Eastern Heights over Northern Valley, 60-14.
- Smith Center over Hill City, 67-0.
- McCook over Ogallala, Neb., 21-7.
- Oakley over Atwood, 44-6.
- Kansas State over San Jose State, 34-14 in the tie breaker.

## Public Notice

Prairie Dog Creek WTAP Sign-up Period Starts September 1

The State Conservation Commission will begin accepting applications for the new water right retirement program, WTAP, beginning September 1.

WTAP is a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to help restore aquifers and streams in critical areas. The Prairie Dog Creek basin has been selected as a pilot project area because it is significant in the State of Kansas' efforts to maintain compliance in the Republican River Compact with the State of Nebraska.

Applicants who are selected for WTAP grants are compensated by the State Conservation Commission in exchange for the permanent retirement of a water right. Priority is given to retiring water rights in areas which would have the greatest impact on the stream system. WTAP grants are approved on the basis of competitive bids and the fair market value of water rights.

To be eligible, water rights must have been actively used in the last 10 years. Dryland farming is permitted after a water right is retired. Limited irrigation can be temporarily allowed to establish a permanent cover on the land being transitioned from irrigation. Partial water right reductions can also be considered for retirement grants.

The first sign-up period will be September 1, 2007 through November 15, 2007.

For more information, contact Steve Frost, Water Conservation Program Manager, at 785-296-8964. Complete WTAP rules and regulations, applications, maps, and other details are posted on the SCC web site at HYPERLINK "http://www.scc.ks.gov" www.scc.ks.gov

Mills Building, 109 SW 9th Street, Suite 500, Topeka, KS 66612-1215  
Phone: 785-296-3600 Fax: 785-296-6172 www.scc.ks.gov

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