

# \* Students challenged to help out

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 she said, and they could use volunteers if anyone is interested in that. There is at least four miles of trails at the park, said Pastor Wiebe. She said she has hiked and taken her mountain bike out on the trails, which cover all kinds of terrain. She said they want to be able to have people use the trails and the park area even more, but it needs to be cleaned up some.

If we didn't have volunteers, said county Commissioner Doyle Brown, there wouldn't be a fire department or an ambulance service. Commissioner Brown said the commissioners meet from 9 a.m. to noon every Tuesday and all of the students are welcome to come to any of their meetings. Magistrate Judge John Bremer joked with the students that he would rather they not come to see him, not in court anyway. County employees, said Judge Bremer, often have to repair things that are damaged or destroyed by vandals, plus do their regular work. They have to pick up litter and fix things that are damaged, he said. That is time and money that they could spend on taking care of more important things. Judy Gaumer, register of deeds, said when the students are 18, they can visit the county clerk's office and register to vote. That's the best way to be a part of your government,

she said. If you need tags for your vehicle, she added, then go see the treasurer. She said if someone wants to do research on a piece of property, they can come see her. "You are welcome to come to the courthouse anytime," she said. Teresa Shaughnessy, activities director at Cedar Living Center, said most of the opportunities to volunteer in the medical field are at the nursing homes, but not all. She asked the students how many have volunteered at the nursing home and three raised their hands.

She said that wasn't quite true, because students who came down to sing, help throw a party, bring in party favors or came with their church were also volunteering. Miss Shaughnessy encouraged the students to come volunteer at the hospital, Cedar Living Center or the Good Samaritan Center.

Before they headed back to class, Mrs. Hissong asked the students to fill out the bottom part of a handout showing what they are interested in and what they would like to volunteer to help with. Options included Sappa Park, the golf course, the county fair, Sunflower Cinema, the county ballparks or race track, the horse arena or helping clean up the town. Mrs. Hissong asked the students to turn the forms in to their home room teachers.

# \* County budget includes increase in taxes for 2008

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 county hasn't received any money from the grant to name and sign the roads, said Mrs. Horn. The clerk said the county is already \$50,000 down compared to last year in employee benefits. The commissioners added \$40,000 for a special fund which could be used for the airport project in Oberlin and \$25,000 for the emergency management department for salary and expenses. The county general fund pays for two-thirds of the salary for Patti Skubal, new emergency management director, with the other third coming out of the sheriff's budget. County employees will get a pay increase, adding approximately \$20,000 to the budget. Mrs. Horn said half of the increase was given in June, with the other half expected to come in October. She said the increases were added into each department's budget, so she didn't know the overall amount.

Mrs. Horn said the budget also reflects the rising price of fuel, weed chemicals and other expenses. Commissioner Stan McEvoy asked at the meeting if the fees the county receives from Red Willow County for jail use could be made a separate line item. Mrs. Horn said they already are. What about the monthly expenses for the jail? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger. That goes against the jail general fund, said Mrs. Horn, so expenses aren't broken down between Red Willow and Decatur County prisoners. What about dispatch, since the City of Oberlin pays for one-third of it? asked Mr. McEvoy. The city is basically a year behind for dispatch charges, said Mr. Unger, so if there is an increase, they will pay it next year. The county's proposed budget for 2008 is printed on Page 4B of today's *Oberlin Herald*.

# New bucket truck purchased by city

The Oberlin City Council agreed to buy a new bucket truck for the electric line crew for \$77,595, giving the city two small trucks. At the meeting Thursday, Sept. 6, Foreman Dan Castle said the city budgeted \$85,000 for the truck this year. He said he received three bids for the one-man truck. The first came from Terex Utility Company for a Terex for \$86,678, the second from Alltec Industries Inc. for an Alltec for \$77,832 and the third from Layton Truck Equipment Company for a Versalift for \$77,595. Mr. Castle said the city already has a Versalift, the crew is familiar with it and it does a good job. He said he recommends the low bid, which will take 120 days for delivery. He said the crew would use both of the small trucks to trim tree limbs in the alleys around town. Four years ago, he said, the city hired Van's Tree Service to clear out the limbs for the power lines. The project took two years. Those areas need to be maintained, said

Mr. Castle. Also, he said, if the city ever was called on mutual aid, they really couldn't afford to send a truck and a lineman with only one small truck. With this purchase, said Mr. Castle, they could do that. The council approved the low bid. Mr. Castle asked about proposed changes in earned vacation time for employees who have been with the city for longer than 10 years. The council talked about the change at budget time, but didn't make any decision. The council agreed that 10-years employees can earn one and a quarter days a month, which is 15 days, or three weeks, per year. For 15 years, the rate would be one and a half days per month, or 18 days a year, and for 20 years, one and three-quarter days, or 21 days a year, four weeks and one day. Currently for the employees received a day and a quarter after 10 years of service. Employees start earning more vacation time starting in October.



**MEN WORKED** with big machines Monday afternoon moving dirt (below) and smoothing it out (above) at the new location for Hansen Mueller Co. north of U.S. 36 in Oberlin. —Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

# \* Dirt work starts

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 start over, and that wasn't a good option. Work is underway at the highway location, with machines leveling the land out, moving dirt and creating a driveway. The plan for now is to build an office at the new location with a scale and two temporary storage bunkers, he said. Although they got a late start on the work after looking for the right property for the last three to four months, Mr. Mendlik said he hopes to be able to use the new facility by wheat harvest next spring. The two temporary facilities will be able to hold 750,000 bushels of grain, he said, which is more than they have ever been able to store at the old elevator. The current facility downtown can hold 200,000 bushels. Mr. Mendlik said they plan to keep the facility downtown and



use the site for seasonal operations. Maybe, he said, it will be used for smaller quantities of grain, for example, sunflowers. Mr. Mendlik said he has been to Oberlin several times. This is a good, positive community, he

said, and he feels good about what the company is doing. The company also owns an elevator in Cedar Bluffs, he said, and it plans a similar set up there, building a temporary bunker that can store more grain. The company

hasn't made any decisions about what they will do for a permanent facility in Cedar Bluffs, he said. With the bunkers, said Mr. Mendlik, trucks will be able to dump much faster, which gets farmers back to their fields sooner.

# Director talks about emergency coverage

The emergency management director talked with the Decatur County commissioners about coverage during a fire northwest of town last month. Director Patti Skubal said at the meeting Tuesday, Aug. 27, that firefighters did a good job and everyone she called in to help re-

sponded. At one point, she said, they were talking about calling in some aerial units, but it was too windy for that. Fire Chief Bill Cathcart was the incident commander, she said, but she helped with traffic control and calling other agencies. Mrs. Skubal said one of the trucks from Red Willow County lost a

transmission while fighting the fire. She said Ambulance Director Linda Manning did a good job getting water to the people. While calling other agencies in to help, said Mrs. Skubal, she found out that the county's mutual aid agreements with area departments may not be up to date. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he thought those were covered under the new Kansas Mutual Aid Law for everyone in the state. Mrs. Skubal said part of the disaster plan is having those in place, and she said she will check into them. She said she will do an action report on the fire, which will help the county come closer to compliance with the state of the emergency plan. She said she is working on the plan on-line. Mr. Hirsch said Chief Cathcart also needs to fill out paperwork with the state Forest Service. Mrs. Skubal said she will check into that and talk to the chief.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy asked if Mrs. Skubal has set any goals for herself. Mrs. Skubal said she is working on a list. When do you think the plan will be up to date? asked Mr. McEvoy. She said she thought that once it is all on the computer, she should be able to have it done by fall or early winter. Mrs. Skubal said she has received an emergency shelter agreement from Norcat, but still is waiting on the one from Jennings. Another thing with the fire, she said, was she didn't have a sheriff's vehicle to take so she used her own. She said she talked to Sheriff Ken Badsy and they plan to go pick up one from Barry Richards, who used to serve as a part-time deputy sheriff. He may still serve as a reserve deputy. Mrs. Skubal serves full-time as emergency preparedness director and also is a sheriff's deputy.

# Council to discuss wind-power contract

The Oberlin City Council will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday downstairs in The Gateway for its second meeting of the month. Although there was no formal agenda as of Monday, the meeting is supposed to include a discussion on a power contract offered by Sunflower Wind, which plans to build a "wind farm" in

Decatur County. The council wanted to wait until this meeting to get some questions answered that officials with the wind company couldn't answer at a session on Thursday, Sept. 6. The meeting is open to the public, but will not be on cable local access channel 7.

# Decatur County Health Department

Mini Health Fair...Doing Blood draws on October 2. 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Please call for an appointment or more information.

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