

Council votes to hold water plant

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin City Council put a \$4.2 million loan application for a water treatment plant on hold again Thursday after a majority of the members voted no on a resolution to finish the application, saying they wanted to hear from voters.

At the meeting Thursday, Oct. 18, the council tabled a decision when Councilwoman Rhonda May voted against the resolution, leaving it short of a majority of the full council. With only three members at the meeting, the votes in favor from

Councilmen Ray Ward and Jay Anderson didn't add up to a majority of the elected members.

The plan — which includes a water treatment plant to remove both arsenic and uranium, new distribution lines and vales and drilling a new well at the irrigation well site south of town — has been talked about for more than a year. The city would borrow most of the money from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's revolving loan fund.

The council talked at length about the plant and the plan to borrow a little more

than \$4 million at the meeting Thursday night, but in the end Councilman Rob McFee, Councilwoman Marcia Lohofener and Ms. May voted against the resolution. The three said they want to have some public input before making the decision, which could mean yet another rate hike for water users.

Mrs. Lohofener added that even if the federal government says the city needs to do something about the arsenic and uranium levels, she wants to protest new standards which measure contamination which once was ignored. She said she wants to say that

she doesn't like being forced to do something like this.

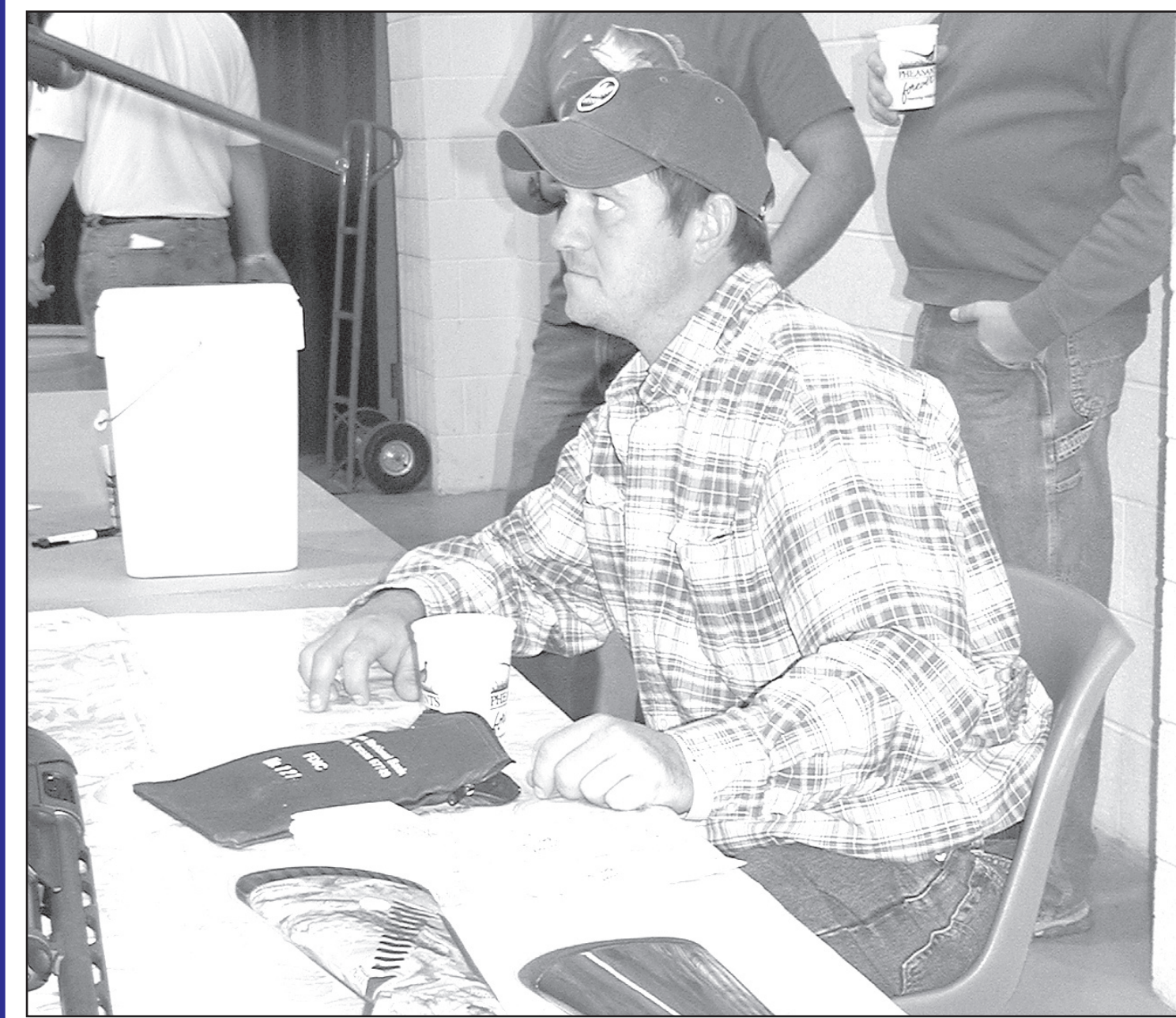
That doesn't matter, said Mr. McFee; the city will still have to put in a water-treatment plant.

Although the council talked some about nitrates in the water, the plant isn't being built to take the nitrates out. David Blau, with the city's engineering firm, Miller and Associates of McCook, said they would have to add something onto the plant to deal with the nitrates, but that can be done. He said the city is under the nitrate limit right now.

The city is only over the allowed limit for arsenic and uranium, said Mr. Blau. The city has taken some wells out of service because of nitrates, however, and could use them if a treatment plant would remove the contamination.

Are there any other towns in the area that are looking at this same kind of plant? asked Ms. May. The city is talking about borrowing \$4 to \$5 million and there are only 2,000 people to pay back the debt.

Mr. Blau said Miller is working on similar problems in Atwood, but they decided (See WATER on Page 10A)



AT THE PHEASANTS FOREVER BANQUET Friday night, Casey Alstrom (above) sold raffle tickets for several guns which people could win. Kelly Brown (below) spun a wheel to win five to 20 raffle tickets before dinner.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Banquet draws a crowd

Men and women walked around the arena at The Gateway on Friday night, some with numbered raffle tickets in their hands and others ready to make a bid on a silent-auction item.

Just under 330 people turned out for the annual banquet put on by Sunflower Chapter of Pheasants Forever, which traditionally kicks off pheasant season in northwest Kansas.

Rick Doeden, who helped head up the event, said The Gateway staff fed 289 people at the meal, which started at 5 p.m.

Things got under way with a happy hour, giving people a chance to decide which of the pictures and other items they were going to bid on. Others bought raffle tickets for a chance to win a gun, dog food and bowl, T-shirt or other camouflage items.

One of the live auction items, said Mr. Doeden, was a boy from the audience. People bid on the youth and then the one who put up the highest amount of money won and also got to take home a gun. The highest bidder for the kid receives half of the money and Pheasants Forever keeps the other half.

Fonda Farr, with Pheasants Forever, said the youth auction brought in \$2,550 total. The boy was from Colorado, she said, but she didn't get his name.

Mrs. Farr said she thought the



auction had gone well, with both the mystery gun — which turned out to be a Tika 330 wing mag rifle — and the 25th anniversary Pheasants Forever Browning shotgun

both selling well.

Mr. Doeden said the proceeds hadn't been totaled yet. He said he thought the banquet had gone well overall, with about one-third

to a half of the people from out of town.

Mrs. Farr said she thought there was a good turnout and all the people seemed to have a good time.

City may shut limb burn pile after misuse

The burn pile for tree limbs and branches the Oberlin city crew maintains southeast of town may be closed since, officials say, the site has been misused several times.

City Administrator Gary Shike told the Oberlin City Council about the problem at a meeting Thursday night. He said the burn pile has been almost more of a hassle than it's worth. People have put banned items, like furniture and tires, in the pile and the crew has to dig them out.

The burn pile is inspected by the state, said Mr. Shike, and the city will lose its burn permit if those kinds of things are found in the pile.

Is there a way to fence the pile off or monitor it? asked Councilwoman Rhonda May. Mr. Shike said he didn't know.

The crew doesn't have the manpower to monitor it, said Councilman Jay Anderson. They wouldn't be able to have someone sit at the gate.

If the city doesn't have a public burn pile, what happens to the limbs? asked Councilwoman Marcia Lohofener.

People will have to haul them to the landfill and pay to dump them, said Mr. Shike.

It is convenient for people to have the burn pile in town, said Dave Blau, who was at the meeting to discuss the water treatment plant. Some people can't get off work

Council Roundup

At a meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Put an application to borrow \$4.2 million from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment revolving loan fund for a water treatment plant on hold to allow time for public comment. Story above.

- Heard that the city might have to close the free burn pile east of town because people are misusing it. Story at left.

to take items to the landfill during operating hours, he said.

The only things allowed in the burn pile are trees and limbs, said Mr. Shike. People aren't allowed to dump weeds or dead plants.

The county runs a compost pile east of town where people can dump grass clippings for free. There is also a pile that people can

put garden waste and weeds in. Tree limbs and brush aren't allowed.

To take a pick-up load to the landfill east of town on U.S. 36 costs \$12, said Linda Schroer. The landfill is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon the first Saturday of each month.

Retired colonel recalls his time in parachute training

By **COL. DELBERT TOWNSEND**
U.S. Army, retired

I read with interest the article in the July 18 issue of *The Oberlin Herald* concerning Lora E. Marietta, a Townsend Scholarship recipient, completing the U.S. Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga., on July 13. As a graduate of the Airborne School some 63 years ago, I would like to relate my story.

I graduated from Kansas State College in December 1942. I completed the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program but did not receive a commission in the Army because summer camp had been discontinued because of the war.

I entered the Army as a private



Townsend '63 Townsend '05

in early January 1943, completed my basic training at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., and was transferred to the Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga. I was commissioned as a second lieutenant of Infantry on 15 May 1943 and assigned to the 17th Airborne Division at Camp (See OFFICER on Page 10A)

Area veterans invited to celebrate their day

Veterans Day is Sunday, and several groups plan events to honor the men and women who have served or are serving the United States in the military.

Sunday, the Oberlin American Legion Post has set up a ceremony for disposal of unserviceable flags at 3 p.m. in the Legion parking lot. Anyone interested in the service can come watch.

That evening, the Legion will hold a pancake feed starting at 5:30 p.m. The meal will be served for a donation, with the money going for scholarships the post gives out.

Monday, students at Oberlin Elementary School have invited all veterans from the area to a program 2:30 p.m. in the gym. All parents, grandparents, veterans and their families are invited.

Tuesday, the Oberlin senior meal site has invited veterans in for lunch. The meal, at 11:30 a.m., includes turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, cranberry relish, dressing and pumpkin bars for \$2.50.

Anyone who is planning to attend should call the center at 475-3222 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or Helen Gee at home at 475-2389 by Friday.

Pheasant opener sends hunters to the fields

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Pheasant season kicked off bright and early Saturday morning with hunters out in groups, many with dogs, looking for the colorful

birds.

This was the first year that the season started the first weekend in November.

Although fall weather has set in, leaving many days on the chilly

side, Saturday the thermometer hit 66 degrees as the high. Joe Dejmal, co-owner of Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, said it was a little warm for good hunting.

He said they had some hunters in

the store on Monday who said they didn't shoot many birds in the warm weather.

Mr. Dejmal said they had another group in the same day who said they (See SEASON on Page 10A)

*Water loan application still on hold

(Continued from Page 1A) to look for water farther out from town.

Are there any towns using the Dakota Aquifer? asked Ms. May. Mr. Blau said he didn't know, but the research he did, which he handed out, shows Oberlin in a section that can't use the Dakota because it isn't suitable drinking water. He said it is way too high in salt and it would cost more to treat all of the water through reverse osmosis or something like that.

One of the treatment plants the city looked at was a reverse osmosis system and it was more expensive, he said.

That's assuming that reverse osmosis is the best way to get rid of the salt? Ms. May asked. Mr. Blau agreed.

She said one of her concerns is if the city borrows \$4 to \$5 million, then that requires a rate increase. What if people don't want to pay those rates to water their lawns so they put in private wells for outside water? That means less water use and the rates will have to increase even more to pay back the debt, she said.

Other cities, said Mr. Blau, have had to pass an ordinance saying that people can't drill new private wells.

The proposal shows the basic usage rate at \$37.58 a month, said Mr. Blau.

The federal government hasn't shown any public health benefiting from all of this, Mrs. Lohofener noted.

Is there a deadline on the city? asked Mayor Joe Stanley.

Yes, said Mr. Blau, but Mr. Shike said the city hasn't received an administrative order forcing it to act yet.

The city could have until December or after the new year until it gets an order, said Mr. Blau. If that happens, a time line will be set up for the city to comply, and if the project isn't done, the city could be fined.

Nitrates, said Ms. May, a petroleum engineer by trade, have been proven dangerous for infants, pregnant women and older people. Arsenic and uranium at these levels haven't been proven dangerous.

"Actually," she said, "I think we need a new (swimming) pool more than we need a water treatment plant. We have other things we need

to spend the money on." Does the city have the money to pay the fines? asked Councilman Ward. If the city waits to build the plant, he added, the cost will go up.

There will also be fewer people to help pay back the loans, said Mr. McFee.

Was well No. 12 east of town part of this? asked Mr. Blau.

The well was put in with a grant, said Mr. Shike, but the drilling was approved with the understanding that the city was moving to build a water treatment plant.

So the government could possibly say that the well can't be used, Mr. Blau said.

Mrs. Lohofener said she is amazed that more people haven't said anything to the council talking about borrowing \$4 million. She said she would like to have some time to get some comments.

"The whole thing really irks me," she said. "I think there is a point where we have to stand up and tell the government no we can't do this."

The only way to come out from under government requirements, said Mr. McFee, is become an unincorporated city.

That could ruin any work with the Federal Aviation Administration on the airport project, said Dr. Anderson.

The city doesn't have lots of options, said Ms. May, but right now she wants to go by what Nancy Reagan said and "Just Say No." If the city borrows the money for a water plant, she said, it won't have the ability to borrow money for a new pool or other things.

Like streets, said Mrs. Lohofener.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the bond and debt limit is 25 to 30 percent of the city's valuation, but that doesn't include utilities like sewer or water.

Mr. Shike said if the council decides not to build the plant, he would rather tell the government instead of just letting them find out.

With the desire to ask people what they think about the water treatment plant and the city borrowing over \$4 million to build it, the council decided not to pass the resolution for a loan application in a 3-2 vote.

Mayor Stanley said he assumed they would discuss the issue again.

*Season starts with a warm day

(Continued from Page 1A) shot the limit, four male birds per hunter.

There seemed to be some dry pockets, he said, where there weren't any birds and other places that had lots. Mr. Dejmaj said they stayed busy at the store, with lots of people from out of town.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said he and a group of hunters, including his kids and some friends, had gone out Saturday, Sunday and Monday morning. In all, he said, he thought they shot 40 birds, hunting mostly west of town.

The weather, said Mr. Badsky, was pretty warm on Saturday, but the wind really seemed to cool things off just enough to see the birds.

Larry Gilbert, who lives in Manhattan, said he has been coming here to hunt since 2002, after he had a lung transplant which allowed him to hunt and fish again. He said he was born in Oberlin and raised in Atwood, so he enjoys coming back

home to hunt. Mr. Gilbert said he doesn't return to the area just for pheasants, but also comes back home to hunt doves and to fish.

Saturday, the opening day, said Mr. Gilbert, was tough because the wind was blowing so hard; it was hard to scare up any birds. He and a group of six others hunted mostly in western Decatur County and eastern Rawlins County, south of U.S. 36. He said they were able to bag six birds on Saturday.

Mr. Gilbert said this area offers the best hunting in Kansas, and even though the group wasn't so lucky this year, that's how hunting goes: Sometimes the hunting is good and sometimes not so good.

He said that he likes to return home to hunt because of the friends he has and the "delightful atmosphere" in Oberlin. Everyone is just so friendly.

Although Mr. Gilbert said he wasn't able to stay and hunt Sunday, the group bagged five birds. They attended an American Legion hunters' feed Saturday night



INCLUDED IN THE GENERAL STAFF of the 7th Infantry Division in Korea was Maj. Delbert Townsend (above, fifth from left) in April 1958. First Lt. Townsend

(below left) stood with his parachute during training at Fort Bragg, N.C.

*Officer remembers parachute training

(Continued from Page 1A) Mackall, N.C.

The 17th Airborne was filled up with possibly some 18,000 draftees from Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. We completed our basic and advanced unit training, then in early February 1944, moved to Tennessee for the so-called "Tennessee Maneuvers," which we completed around late May 1944. Following the maneuvers, the division was moved to Camp Forest, Tenn.

At that time we knew we were going overseas but not where. We had completed glider training that included loading and lashing, with several day flights and a few night flights and landings. About this time we received the shock of our lives. The 17th was seeking volunteers for the parachute school. I had been with the division for just over a year and had been promoted to first lieutenant. You guessed it; I volunteered for jump school.

The Airborne School in those days was essentially the same as it is today — physical training, jumping out of mock-ups and the 35-foot tower, followed by four day jumps and one night jump. We did not have the 250-foot towers that are used at the Fort Benning school.

Physical training was pretty much routine but very intensive. We had a staff sergeant by the name of Garcia who would take us on our daily run of some 40 minutes without stopping. Each class would run just once a day, but Sgt. Garcia would run with all eight classes and never stop. During the run, all I ever heard Sgt. Garcia say was "Mind Over Matter — We Don't Mind and You Don't Matter." I often wonder where he is today.

We completed our physical training, mock-up and tower training, with possibly 20 percent failing to make it. The next big step was the five jumps, four day and one night, to qualify as a U.S. Army paratrooper.

My first jump was easy because I did not know what to expect. As an officer, I was always No. 1 in the stick of some 15 jumpers. We were using C-47s (the same as the civilian DC-3), so we could exit from just one door, with the pilot making a second pass for the

second stick. Once we were suited up, we loaded up and took off for the drop zone.

As we approached the drop zone, the jump master ordered us to "Stand up and hook up." The next command was "make your equipment check," followed by "Sound off for your equipment check," then "Close up and stand in the door." I stood in the door not really knowing what to expect. The jump master said "GO" and tapped me on the fanny as I bailed out.

I counted, "One thousand, two thousand and three thousand ..." and wow, I got a shock when my parachute opened. I looked up and there was this big white silk canopy over my head. I made possibly three or four oscillations and landed standing up. What a thrill!

The next three jumps were about the same, except I did not land standing up. In each of my first four, looking up after the opening shock and seeing that big white silk canopy was a thrill that's difficult to explain.

On the fifth day, our night jump to qualify was a good bit different. We arrived at the airfield about 8:30 p.m. and checked out our parachutes. We suited up about 9 p.m. and marched out to the C-47. High winds forced us to sit on the ground for about two hours.

About 11 p.m., the all-clear came and we loaded up for our night jump. As we approached the drop zone, we went through the routine steps to prepare to jump. When the jump master gave the command to "Close up and stand in the door," I nearly fainted. As I looked out the door to my right hand, some six or eight feet away, huge sparks were flying out of that C-47 engine exhaust.

Believe me, I was in a state of shock. My only thoughts were that I would be a qualified paratrooper, but I figured I would be dead because those exhaust sparks would catch my parachute on fire.

The jump master said GO, so I bailed out. I counted one thousand, two thousand and three thousand. I got my opening shock and looked up and saw nothing. I knew my chute had opened, but in the dark of night I did not see the reassuring white silk canopy.

I figured out later that was be-



cause on my fifth and final jump to qualify as a paratrooper, I had been issued a camouflage parachute. Believe me, I was one scared soldier. Still, I made several oscillations and landed standing up.

So, I know first-hand what Miss Marietta experienced during her three weeks' school at Fort Benning. Congratulations, Lora, I would love to talk with you after you complete your 68th jump.

Col. Townsend said he completed 68 jumps over his entire military career from 1944 to 1961. After 31 years, though, he decided to retire.

Col. Townsend, 86, now lives in Maryland. He was born in Norcatur and grew up on a farm in the Danbury area, attending a nearby school. In high school, he switched to Decatur Community High School in Oberlin, from which he graduated in 1938. After a year off, he attended Kansas State College in Manhattan, graduating in 1942 and entered the Army a month after.

Col. Townsend served during World War II and was wounded during the Battle of the Bulge. Although he spent three months

in the hospital in England, he said, he was able to return to the service and joined Company A, 194th Glider Infantry in time to make the Rhine River crossing. He stayed in Company A until VE (Victory in Europe) Day.

Throughout Col. Townsend's time in service, he earned many medals and awards, serving during peace and war.

Col. Townsend spent time in Europe, Korea and even with the ROTC unit at the University of Kansas. That doesn't include the 12 years he spent at the Pentagon in Washington.

Years after retirement and spending some time in retail sales, Col. Townsend, decided to start scholarships at both Kansas State University and the University of Nebraska.

The program offers scholarships for two graduating seniors from Decatur Community High School to go to Kansas State University each year and for two in Nebraska. The scholarship pays about \$3,300 a year for tuition, books and fees and \$1,200 one time for a computer.

New addresses required for 911 system

The Decatur County attorney asked commissioners if they need to require people to use new addresses they will receive from the county to work with the Enhanced 911 emergency system.

The commissioners have been working on an addressing system for the last several months. The idea is that then when someone places a 911 call with the new phone system, the address will pop up on the screen. However, people living

in the county don't have an address today, just a route and box number for mail.

Commissioner Ralph Unger and Tim Stallman, road and bridge supervisor, have looked at the aerial maps of the county made for the project several times and worked on the project.

Mr. Unger said he thinks that requiring use of the new addresses is spelled out in the federal grant, and doesn't think that the commis-

sioners need to issue an order. The system won't work, added Commissioner Stan McEvoy at the meeting Tuesday, Oct. 16, unless people use the new addresses.

At some point, the people need to know that, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch, and they need to know their new addresses.

Mr. Unger said the county will send out letters to everyone to tell them what their old address is and what their new one will be.

In other business, the commis-

sioners:

- Transferred \$999 to pay for postage.
- Talked with Ambulance Director Linda Manning, who said Barry Richards, owner of Stellar Sales, found a light bar for the new first response vehicle for \$699. He would allow a \$100 trade in for the old bar. The commissioners approved the purchase.

Don't Forget *The Dresser's*
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 Fall Fashion Show (next door South of the Dresser)
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