

## New runway may cost \$12 million

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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A master plan to build a 7,000-foot-long, 100-foot-wide runway in three phases for Oberlin's airport is almost ready to be sent to the Federal Aviation Administration, city and county officials learned at a meeting Thursday at The Gateway.

The big problem will be figuring out how to raise \$12 million or more to pay for the project, which city and county officials want to accommodate business jets and possibly even military transports.

The project began at the request of Bus and Coach International, which installed

its corporate headquarters and bus sales office in the old Jennings School and needs a nearby runway to serve its executives and customers, to bring in parts and to ship out merchandise.

Brad Weisenberger with Bucher, Willis and Ratliff, the Kansas City engineering firm which is drawing up the plan, explained its elements to around 24 people, including City Council members, county commissioners, Economic Development Corp. board members, business people, airport committee members and others during the public meeting Thursday.

The numbers used for the plan, he said,

are in 2007 dollars, so actual costs could be higher when the runway is built.

The local share of the cost will be around \$831,530, with the total project costing around \$12,213,460. The local share in the first phase could be close to \$700,000, he added.

The project is broken into three phases, Mr. Weisenberger said. The first includes building a 4,800-foot runway, 70 feet wide, endorsed by federal officials, but that could be extended to 5,500 feet by 100 feet to handle bigger jets.

In Phase 1, said Mr. Weisenberger, there are some things that should be done with

local money, including a jet fuel tank with a credit-card reader, terminal building upgrades and parking improvements. The fuel tank will cost around \$80,000, he said.

The second phase would include extending the new northwest-southeast runway to 7,000 feet, while the last phase includes some work on the existing north-south runway, which would remain in service.

Mr. Weisenberger said Congress might change the split for Federal Aviation Administration grants from 95 percent federal and 5 percent local to 90 percent and 10. That change could double the city's cost, he said.

Currently, he said, the city is allocated \$150,000 a year from the federal agency, he said, but that could change, too. Airports with a greater number of planes based at the facility could start getting more money, said Mr. Weisenberger, and those with fewer planes would get less.

Congress has debated these changes for the last eight to nine months, he said, but it won't make any decisions until next year.

What about an environmental assessment? asked Councilwoman Rhonda May. That's the next step, said Mr. Weisenberger, required by federal law.

(See RUNWAY on Page 8A)

## Card circles world

### Late greetings capture our fancy

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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The story of a postcard delivered to an Oberlin woman 93 years after it was written has spread across the world, and that is keeping Oberlin's Bernice Martin pretty busy.

The postcard, addressed to Ethel Martin of Oberlin, was dated in December 1914. Although Ethel died on March 5, 1998, the postcard arrived in the hands of her sister-in-law, who still lives in Oberlin, thanks to postal clerk Rob McFee, who got a call about the card from an Illinois post office.

The card, from Alma, Neb., only about 60 miles away, had turned up in Illinois.

Mr. McFee said he took a call about three months ago and a postal worker asked if he knew the recipient. The post card was slipped in a postal envelope and mailed here, where Mr. McFee made sure it made to Mrs. Martin. Neither of them can remember from where in Illinois the card came from.

Since the story ran on the front page of *The Oberlin Herald* last week, it has been picked up on the Associated Press wire and circled the globe, being featured in dozens of newspapers, web sites and television programs.

Mr. McFee said he has had calls from ABC, CBS in New York and the NBC *Today* show, just to name a few. KAKE-TV from Wichita came out to film.

Mrs. Martin said she has taken lots of calls, including one from Tokyo on Monday. She chuckled, saying it would be fun to see the story in Japanese.

She said she has also received four phone calls from London, calls from Pennsylvania, Arizona, Houston, Dallas and three from Nebraska. The television station from Wichita, said Mrs. Martin, came (See CARD on Page 8A)



**A STATE SNOWPLOW** driver worked east of Oberlin on U.S. 36, scraping the snow along the edge of the pavement and starting to clear the shoulders. After a couple of days of long shifts, the crew declared victory Sunday and went home, with the driving lanes mostly dry and conditions posted as "normal" through the county. The state crew also had to clear U.S. 83 and K-38.

— Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

## Plow drivers clear county for safe driving

State and county crews worked through the weekend clearing highways and county and township roads after a storm on Friday dropped three and a half inches of light, fluffy snow on the area.

Tom Weishapl, supervisor here for the Kansas Department of Transportation, said the crew has been working off and on for the last three weeks, treating roads and clearing snow.

Mr. Weishapl said they went out on Sunday, Dec. 9, on 12-hour shifts and then worked on Monday for 12 hours, too.

Last Wednesday, he said, they put in a couple hours of overtime.

The snow moved in around 3:30 p.m. Friday and the state crews started plowing around 4 p.m., he said. Mr. Weishapl said the crews worked all night and then started again around 8 a.m. Saturday and stayed out until

6 p.m. On Sunday, the crews went back out around 9 a.m. and stayed out until 2 p.m., treating roads and plowing slush.

Before each of the storms, he said, the crew has pretreated the highways with salt water to cut down on ice buildup.

Kirk Ulery, foreman for the county road and bridge department, said the whole crew, 10 men, went out on Saturday and plowed the county roads.

It seemed, he said, like the storm didn't drop as much snow in the southeast as it did in the west and northwest.

After cleaning the county roads, he said, the crew hit the surrounding townships in the west and northwest. Mr. Ulery said they did get some of them in the east, too.

On Sunday, he said, two of the guys came in and finished up in three of the townships.

## Man wins \$1,500—after second glance

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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The air was crisp and snow was piled high in Centennial Park as 200 to 300 shoppers crowded the sidewalks around the gazebo to try their luck at winning \$500 or \$1,500 in scrip from the annual Christmas on Us promotion.

Bundled in coats, hats, scarves, snow boots and gloves, some people had long strands of red and green tickets still connected, others had written the numbers in notebooks and carried the tickets in plastic baggies while still others had taped each of the tickets to sheets of paper so they were easier to look through.

At 11 a.m., a young girl from the audience came up and drew a ticket out of the large trash can filled with over 50,000 of the red and green slips from the merchant-sponsored contest.

No one claimed the first ticket, but next the girl drew a green ticket with No. 579139. Judy Wenger came up with the matching ticket to win the first prize of \$500 in scrip, spendable at sponsoring merchants.

She apparently got the ticket from the LandMark Inn, although she didn't know that. She said she didn't dream that she would win, so she hadn't planned on spending the money. Monday afternoon, though, she reported that she had bought a new glass-top stove from R&M Service Center.

With the help of Adrian Chambers, the next ticket was drawn, a green one with No. 821448 printed on it. Amy Carman thought she had the matching ticket, but was one number off.

Although the drawing paused for a few minutes for people to look, no one came up with the ticket. Just



**WITH STRANDS OF TICKETS** in his hand, Jerry Alstrom searched for the right number to match the ticket drawn for the \$1,500 grand prize in the Oberlin merchant's Christmas on Us promotion.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

as the next ticket was being drawn from the trash can, up came Jerry Alstrom with the matching number to win \$1,500 in scrip money as the grand prize.

Mr. Alstrom said his wife Montine actually got most of their tickets over the past five weeks. They received the winning ticket from Ampride. She wasn't able to make it to

the drawing, so he came instead.

Mr. Alstrom said he wasn't sure what they would do with the money, but thought he would let his wife decide.

Mr. Alstrom said he thought he had missed out. The ticket number was written on a piece of paper, but he couldn't find the ticket right (See WINNERS on Page 8A)



Digital cameras, baby dolls, choo-choo trains and even John Deere toys are a few things on wish lists that kids from Oberlin, Lenora and Selden sent to Santa Claus this year.

Each year, *The Oberlin Herald* prints area youngsters' letters to Santa and then forwards them on to the North Pole. The letters are printed in a special "Letters to Santa" section in this week's newspaper. See Section S inside.